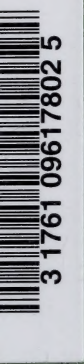


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AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE

**STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

BY

**ARNOLD FREEMAN.**

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**PRICE TWOPENCE.**  
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*Published by  
The Workers' Educational Association, 14, Red Lion Sq.,  
London, W.C.*

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Chesterfield:  
The Broad Oaks Press (T.U.)  
1914.

UNSECTARIAN. NON-PARTY. DEMOCRATIC

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# The Workers' Educational Association.

Central Office:

14, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.

(Founded August, 1903)

Is a Federation of over 2,500 Organisations. It has now:

9 DISTRICT COUNCILS,  
180 BRANCHES,  
11,430 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

It seeks to fulfil its objects in the following principal ways:—

- (a) *By arousing* the interest of the workers in Higher Education, and by directing their attention to the facilities existing.
- (b) *By inquiring* into the needs and feelings of the workers in regard to Education and by representing them to the Board of Education, Universities, Local Education Authorities, and Educational Institutions.
- (c) *By providing*, either in conjunction with the aforementioned bodies or otherwise, facilities for studies of interest to the workers which may have been hitherto overlooked.
- (d) *By publishing*, or arranging for the publication of, such reports, pamphlets, books and magazines as it deems necessary.

MEMBERSHIP is open to individuals on payment of a Minimum Annual subscription of 4/- (including the "Highway," post free).

AFFILIATION FEE FOR NATIONAL AND DISTRICT ORGANISATION, £1 Is. od., which entitles a society to appoint one representative on the Central or District Council.

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AN INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

BY

ARNOLD FREEMAN,

M.A., B. Litt., F.R. Hist. S.

*Editor, with Sidney Webb, of "Seasonal Trades."*

*Author of "Boy Life and Labour."*

Preface by H. A. L. FISHER, M.A., F.B.A.,

*Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield.*

Note by ALBERT MANSBRIDGE,

*Gen. Sec. of the Workers' Educational Association.*

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PRICE TWOPENCE.  
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*Published by  
The Workers' Educational Association, 14, Red Lion Square  
London, W.C.*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE.

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This pamphlet, with its altogether too ambitious title, is a condensation of a course of lectures in Social Economics, which I gave at Sheffield University during the winter of 1913-14. It was written at the request of the students and circulated privately. As nearly five hundred copies were sold at sixpence each, with scarcely any advertisement, I am hoping that the Workers' Educational Association will be justified in their present cheaper publication of it. Except for the correction of a few printer's errors, the pamphlet is left just as it was first printed. Mr. Mansbridge and Dr. H. A. L. Fisher have kindly allowed their prefaces to appear again in this edition.

If circumstances make it possible, it is my intention to amplify this booklet into a full-sized volume within the next twelve months. Meanwhile it is my earnest desire that this pamphlet shall be serviceable to "W.E.A." members in the present crisis of the nation's affairs.

The urgency of the time makes me bold to plead with my readers in a spirit which would not normally be justifiable. My appeal is for the most earnest study *now* of social and economic problems. There is a crying need already for a thorough education of the public mind upon the appropriate measures we should be taking to relieve distress and maintain our internal organisation. When the war is over, there will be such a re-shaping of social conditions in this and every other country as will tax our moral and intellectual resources to exhaustion-point. My appeal is to every member of the "W.E.A." to make it his duty to know exactly what we ought to do to relieve distress at the present time and to serve our fellow-workers intelligently when the war is over. It is the greatest opportunity the "W.E.A." will ever have of making public opinion. If the opportunity is made the most of by thinking and active men and women, I am persuaded that out of the confusion of this time we shall be able to build up that great democracy to which the whole history of the country has been a preliminary.

We persuade one another that it was the Kaiser, through his lust for self-glorification, who made this war. Would it be possible for one man to transform all Europe into a slaughter-house unless that same Kaiser-spirit found its response in human nature in every corner of this continent? It is the "Kaiser" in each one of us that makes wars possible. It is because we have in every nation, and in every class, multitudes of men and women who neglect the service of their fellow-creatures in a desire for self-indulgence and self-aggrandisement, that this catastrophe has fallen upon us all. It is a case of devil-possession, and our only hope is to exorcise ourselves of the evil spirit. Our avowed intention is to cast out "Kaiserism" in Germany by brute force. We must be no less resolute to cast it out of this country by education.

ARNOLD FREEMAN,

4, Oakbrook Road,

Sheffield.

October 23rd, 1914.

## PREFACE

By H. A. L. FISHER, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield.

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What can a University do for the working classes? We might as well ask what the moon can do for the working classes. The moon is prepared to do for workers what it is equally prepared to do for dukes, earls, and viscounts. It will light them on a dark night. Its brilliance is impartial and transcends all distinctions of class and wealth. Anybody can look at the moon; anybody can *not* look at it. The moon is exactly what we choose to make of it: either a disk of silver, or a force acting upon the tides, or a frozen and wandering graveyard, or an endless source of consoling poetic sentiment. An artist can make a good deal of the moon, an idiot can make nothing of it whatever.

A University has nothing to do with distinctions founded on money or opinion. It is neither capitalist nor proletarian, Liberal nor Conservative, individualist nor Fabian. It wears no label, for labels are made to economise thought, and Universities are made to spend it. In a certain sense we may say that the principal function of Universities is the negative function of knocking nonsense out of people's heads and of filling the vacuum with orderly habits of intelligent curiosity about the things which really matter. It is never the business of a University to propagate an opinion; that is the function of missions and clubs, of churches and parties. A University exists for knowledge, and, as the Greek philosophers pointed out, knowledge is a very different thing from opinion. A University does not dictate opinion, but trains the mind to scrutinise its prejudices, to dispel its ignorance, and to ground its notions upon a basis of tested knowledge. It opens doors of hospitality to any honest exercise of human thought.

Most of the serious literature of knowledge which is read in the world to-day has only been rendered possible by the existence of Universities. The worker who in his scant moments of leisure wishes to glean fragments of information about the stars in the heavens, or the fossils in the rocks, or the fish in the sea, must draw upon funds of knowledge and enquiry accumulated by the labour of students trained in Universities. Indeed, but for the fact that human society has wisely set apart a certain portion of its wealth to hire

men to engage upon the great business of learning, thinking, and teaching, how little should we know! The small text-book read on the tram or in the classroom of an elementary school feeds upon the large text-book, and this in turn is derived from the manifold researches of active minds schooled, if not endowed, by Universities.

It is, then, through books that the Universities help the workingman. But this help can only be given on the condition that the University does not debase its intellectual currency. In a material world increasingly governed by the vulgar notion of quantity, the University stands out not for quantity but for quality. Its primary business is to give the best obtainable training to men who are qualified to receive it. And in doing this the University exercises an influence which runs through the whole "web and warp" of society, acting upon the secondary school, which in turn acts upon the primary school, so that every part of the scholastic fabric is strengthened and improved.

And to those who question whether this double influence of the University through books and the hierarchy of our schools is sufficient to establish it in the good graces of thinking members of the industrial democracy, I would put this question—Has the democracy no interest in the education of the middle and upper classes? Is it not rather an urgent interest that the employer of labour should be gentle rather than rough, educated rather than uneducated, considerate rather than obtuse? Would the artisan find the world more tolerable if nobody enjoying a higher social station than himself had ever caught the glow of an intellectual and moral ideal from the thinkers and teachers of a University, had ever learned the lesson of humility which comes to the true student, or had felt the power of knowledge to alleviate the dullness of life? A community is too closely knit together for it to be possible for the education appropriate to any part of it to fall into neglect without evil effects being experienced in every other part. People talk of the ignorance of the poor; there is a much more dangerous form of ignorance—the ignorance of the rich. But it is a mistake to believe that Universities only train the rich. Our great dependency of India is governed largely by Scots, many of whom are drawn from very humble homes, but who have won their way to places of great station and responsibility through the education which they have received at the Scottish Universities. In the government of India, Yorkshire practically plays no part at all, and though other causes, and in particularly the prosperity of the Yorkshire industries, may be brought forward in explanation, the principal reason seems to me to be due to the fact that, whereas Scotland has for many generations been equipped with cheap and vigorous Universities, the University movement in Yorkshire is still in its infancy.

Still it may be urged that, however cheap and effective Universities may be made, and whatever added perfections may be given to the educational ladder, it will still only be the rare individual who, starting from a worker's home, is able to obtain the full benefit of University life. This is true, and until recently we should all have doubted whether the Universities could directly touch the main body of workingmen and women who are already involved in the grinding machinery of industrial life. How can a workingman get University learning? Elementary learning he may of course get, the learning of a secondary school he may possibly get, but University learning, which implies that the student jumps off from the higher secondary school stage, can he possibly have the time or the surplus energy to conquer this too? The experience of the Workers' Educational Association supplies some answer to this question. All over the country workers have been found to join classes where teaching of a University type is given, to go through a serious course of reading, to write essays upon themes prescribed by their tutors, and to emerge after three years' study not only with an equipment of tested knowledge upon a field carefully circumscribed, but also, as we are informed, with something of the real academic spirit.

What is that spirit? It may be described as an alert readiness to interrogate facts and to abide by the award of reason. All dogma in the sphere of living human interests is abhorrent to it, for as soon as knowledge is only required for controversial purposes, half the value of knowledge disappears. The living, growing, changing thing turns into a dead stone to be hurled at an adversary. The open door is violently closed. The fairy spirit of curiosity is slain by the same dull demon who writes our platform speeches and inspires the tirades of our mechanical press.

In Sheffield, partly owing to the existing character of the local industries, partly owing to the "shift system" and overtime, the Workers' Educational Association starts under peculiar disadvantages. Nevertheless, it would be strange if in so vast and intelligent an industrial population there were not material to furnish ten tutorial classes each of twenty students. We in the University do not despair of such a result, and it is a happy augury that the work of spreading University knowledge among the workers of this region has been taken up by so keen a student and so good a teacher as the author of the spirited little pamphlet to which these few words serve as an introduction.

H. A. L. FISHER.

## Note on the Workers' Educational Association

By ALBERT MANSBRIDGE.

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When the mind grows troubled in its efforts to find solutions to all those huge and oftentimes baffling problems which are pressing about us to-day, and which Mr. Arnold Freeman lays so clearly before us in this exceedingly thoughtful and suggestive pamphlet, a new hope and courage come to it when it turns to the subject of education. The whole tangled business of this modern world of ours straightens out a little; our faith grows stronger again, our vision of the future brighter and clearer. Education—and heaven knows how many false personifications of her which are stalking about the land have to be overthrown—is full of power to bring harmony and beauty into our civilisation, where now the eye sees discord and ugliness.

On p. 32, Mr. Arnold Freeman says: "A movement was started some few years ago, called the Workers' Educational Association, to provide education for adult working men and women. . . . It seems to me one of the most promising instruments we have for building up the New Social Order."

Let us quite briefly look a little more closely at this movement and at what it is doing. Started in 1903, it has now grown into a great federation of over 2,500 organisations—trade unions, co-operative societies, working men's and women's clubs, teachers' associations, university bodies, etc.; also of over 10,000 individual members. It has some 180 branches in all parts of the country, and is at work not only in the United Kingdom and Ireland, but also in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. That it has become a worldwide movement is perfectly natural, because the hunger for a broader education than has been theirs in the past is universal among working men and women, and the "W.E.A." is out to help satisfy that hunger.

The Association is unsectarian and non-party; it welcomes and respects divers kinds of beliefs and opinions. It only asks of its members that their beliefs and opinions shall be real ones; that they shall be genuine seekers after truth, and shall face each problem as it arises steadfastly and without prejudice.

All kinds of workers come together in its ranks—miners, railwaymen, shop assistants, farm labourers, mill hands, housewives, teachers, university



professors, and many others, all meeting together on an absolutely equal footing. The "W.E.A." realised from its start how greatly the realms of knowledge have been impoverished by the breach that has for so long existed between labour and learning. On the one hand, it saw men and women who have the kind of education that can only be won by real experience, by manual toil, by struggle and hardship, who yet lack that other kind of education which helps them to think and express themselves clearly and connectedly, and to draw at firsthand from the storehouses of human knowledge. On the other hand, it saw people who have had free access to these, but who in their turn lack understanding and practical experience of all sorts of questions, more particularly of economic ones. And one of the great things the "W.E.A." is doing is to draw these different types of people together, to learn of one another and to teach one another. This is what is taking place with such wonderful success and mutual benefit to all concerned in the Tutorial Classes which Mr. Arnold Freeman describes, and in all those numbers of other classes organised by the "W.E.A." and run on very similar lines.

Throughout the country, working men and women of all ages—an old lady of 74, for example, after powerful service to the community, recently joined a Tutorial Class—are eagerly studying economics, history, philosophy, psychology, literature and biology, are doing work of real university standard, and are bringing an enthusiasm and a freshness and originality of outlook which are delighting and astonishing their tutors.

The splendid part of the whole thing is that these students are moved by pure love of knowledge and desire to equip themselves in such a way as will best fit them to serve the community. They do not join a class because this seems to them a good method for getting on in the world, because they think that the education so gained will help them to earn an extra shilling or two a week, or will give them a different social status.

Women, just as much as men, are coming into the movement in ever-increasing numbers. Many have been emphatic in declaring that thereby life has become a new thing to them, full of hitherto undreamed-of possibilities. Instances are on record of sweated women workers attending a Shakespeare class week by week; of a little shirt-maker finding one of her chief joys in life in the study of Greek life and literature; of a woman tramping two miles to her village history class, and never missing putting in an appearance for two winters.

The mention of this last student leads me to speak for just a moment of the work that the Workers' Educational Association is doing in the villages. Mr. Arnold Freeman, on p. 17, in speaking of English rural life, says: "The

countryside is deserted. Agriculture can never again become the 'root-life.''' At the same time, he would probably willingly agree that wider and more geenrous opportunities for education in the villages will do much to re-vivify them, and to check somewhat the constant emigration to the towns. The Association is now at work in over twenty villages, and classes have been held in history, literature, natural science, and hygiene, in several cases a large percentage of the students being workers on the land. Moreover, acting, Morris dancing, singing, and summer rambles about the neighbourhood have been organised by our village branches. Let this sort of thing only spread, and we shall see a changed countryside, peopled with men and women who will understand their own needs and will know better how to express them.

In town and village alike, then, this educational movement of ours is full of abundant promise for the future. We shall go forward as an association, working with all our might to satisfy that hunger for education that is abroad, and to awaken it where it has not yet been consciously felt; working, too, to help form an enlightened public opinion on educational matters; working for all true educational reforms. For we are confident that only through education—mental, moral, and spiritual—will men and women enter into their lawful heritage of full, glad life.

ALBERT MANSBRIDGE.

# England One Hundred & Fifty Years Ago

## On the Eve of the Industrial Revolution.

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“Could the England of 1685,” Macaulay says, “be by some magical process brought before our eyes, we should not know one landscape in a hundred or one building in ten thousand. The country gentleman would not recognise his own fields. The inhabitant of the town would not recognise his own street. Everything has been changed, but the great features of Nature and a few massive and durable works of human art. We might find out Snowdon and Windermere, the Cheddar Cliffs or Beachy Head. We might find out here and there a Norman minster or a castle which witnessed the Wars of the Roses. But, with such rare exceptions, everything would be strange to us.”

Macaulay was looking back over the century and a half that elapsed between the reign of Charles II. and the time in which he wrote. The change has been even more startling in the century and a half that separates us from the England of the accession of George III. In a period so brief that two long lives would cover it, the face of this country has been completely transformed.

To know something of this mediæval condition of society in 1764, and to realise how swiftly modern England has come into being, is essential to any sure apprehension of the social problems that confront us to-day. It is only as we come to understand what changes have been made and why they have come about, that we can anticipate the developments of the future.

In 1764 the population of England and Wales was considerably less than the present population of Greater London. The most reliable estimates point to something like 6,000,000 persons. And at that period, as Defoe tells us, “The country South of the Trent is by far the largest as well as the richest and most populous.” “In truth,” says Macaulay, “a large part of the country beyond the Trent, down to the eighteenth century, was in a state of barbarism. . . . Before the union of the two British crowns, and long after that union, there was as great difference between Middlesex and Northumberland as there is now between Massachusetts and the settlements of those squatters who, far to the west of the Mississippi, administer a rude justice with the rifle and the dagger.”

Among the towns London was pre-eminent, and contained about three-quarters of a million inhabitants. Bristol had 100,000; Norwich 50,000; Manchester and Liverpool each about 35,000; Birmingham, Sheffield and Leeds each nearly 30,000. But two-thirds of the population lived in rural

areas, and the village, not the town, was the typical unit of social and industrial life.

In order to understand the industrial and social arrangements that characterised this period, it is essential to realise that communications were in the most imperfect state. It took an unconscionable time to send goods from one country to another in a sailing vessel, and the chances of shipwreck and piracy were considerable. Hence the traffic between one country and another in merchandise or ideas was insignificant. The internal means of communication were equally undeveloped. The rivers were the chief mode of transit; the first canal was cut only in 1755; the main roads were, with few exceptions, vile beyond description; in most country districts there were no roads at all that would take wheeled vehicles. Highwaymen or footpads infested the lines of traffic. Such a condition of communications made travelling out of the question for all but the most wealthy or the most adventurous; it effectually isolated each little village-community from its neighbour; it determined the framework in which the life of the period had to be carried on. The lack of communications enforced upon each little village-community the provision of its own needs from the niggard supplies within its own tiny area. Only by the incessant labour of every member of the family, aged grandparents as well as tiny infants, could the bare necessities of life be provided for each household. The villagers had none of the luxuries and few of what we should call the comforts or even the decencies of existence. Everything was "home-made," from the squalid, insanitary cottage in which the family lived and died, to the wooden spoons and forks that they shaped of a winter's evening in the chimney corner. The spinning and weaving of wool were combined with agricultural and pastoral pursuits; in all essentials the villagers lived the kind of life that mankind has adopted ever since we have written records. They lived "on the soil" and supplied all their needs by direct effort. Although it is true that here and there a factory was arising and that towns were already increasing in size, still these phenomena were at that time novel and abnormal. Manufacture was still in its domestic stage, and agriculture was the foundation-industry of the country.

The system of agriculture was identical in method and result with that in use at the time the seal of King John was affixed to Magna Carta. The villagers, who rented their houses from the Lord of the Manor, held the land in common. This land was divided up into tiny strips, and each villager was allotted portions in areas of differing fertility, in order to equalise the total value of the holdings of each member. Most of these strips owed rent to the Lord of the Manor, but many of them were freeholds belonging to the yeomen. These complicated arrangements for tenure, combined with the ignorance, the antiquated methods, and the lack of equipment on the part of the villagers, made agriculture wretchedly unproductive. "Never were more miserable crops seen," cries Arthur Young, "than all the spring ones in the common fields—absolutely beneath contempt!"

The social system of the time was still feudal in its essential features. Throughout the countryside the landowner's word was law and his power was irresistible. Local government and justice hinged upon his authority as Justice of the Peace; economic control over his tenants was vested in him as superior landlord. In both Houses of Parliament the landlords were the dominant class, and it was they who "ran" the country. Not one person in five hundred possessed the right to vote, and most of those who had such a privilege exercised it in obedience to the command of some landed proprietor. Both the King and the House of Lords had considerably more:

power than they have at the present day, but the ultimate sovereignty in the Constitution was recognised as resident in the House of Commons. There was not, however, anything approaching democratic government. It was not until 1776 that the rebellious American Colonies declared the inalienable right of every individual to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"; and not until 1789 that the revolutionaries in Paris affirmed to the world that nations should be built upon the principles of "liberty, fraternity and equality." In 1764 England was still untroubled by these modern ideas, and the very notion of government "by the people" and "for the people" would have seemed preposterous to all classes, and most of all to "the people" themselves. Centuries of a hierarchical régime had bred in them habits of unquestioning submission to the social order in which they lived. They were stupid and ignorant, and quite incapable of forming political opinions or undertaking the duties of government. It was only where they were beginning to mass together in the towns, where conversation flowed more freely, that new ideas of government began to circulate.

If progress means the utilisation of the forces of Nature for the service of man, England was at this time in a wretchedly unprogressive condition. The English people in 1764 were at the mercy of Nature. The magical possibilities latent in coal and steam and iron were unrecognised; and therefore in the midst of wealth incredible, which a knowledge of these secrets would have unlocked for them, the people slaved day and night for the barest physical necessities, and among them disease and death worked havoc which we should regard as intolerable even in our slums.

All the power over Nature which the English people at this time possessed lay in their own muscles. It was not until 1769 that Watt took out his patent for the steam-engine. "I sell, Sire," said his partner Boulton to George III., "what all the world desires—Power!" The application of steam-power to man's affairs has changed the face of the world infinitely more than any other event in the history of mankind. From that time forward man began to be master of Nature, and if he is still poor, it is not Nature's fault, but his own.

# England One Hundred Years Ago.

## In the Thick of the Industrial Revolution.

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The steam-engine unquestionably plays the chief part (hero or villain—which you will) in the great drama of the Industrial Revolution, the last scenes of which have yet to be enacted. It was impossible for a village yokel to house a steam-engine in his cottage. The use of this instrument of production, therefore, necessitated the erection of a factory in which to keep it. Domestic industry came to an end and the factory system took its place. And as the workers congregated around their place of employment, so the modern over-populated industrial town came into being.

In 1814 this transformation was rapidly being effected. England was in the thick of the Industrial Revolution. It is true that there were extensive survivals of the domestic system of manufacture, especially in the time-honoured woollen industry. The two employments of agriculture and manufacture were still in many parts united in the same household or in the same person. But the on-coming tide had already surrounded these islets, and it was obvious that they would sooner or later be submerged.

The improvements being made in communication with other nations, as well as within our own boundaries, made possible the manufacture of much larger quantities of goods to supply an increasing market. What is called "large-scale production" came into being. Machinery was rapidly installed in industry after industry. By 1814 steam was established as the main motive power for industrial purposes. The Industrial North flashed into existence, immediately the priceless supplies of coal and iron began to be utilised in industry. Coal provided the energy that drove the steam-engine; iron provided the machines that it set in motion.

The effects of these developments are nowhere more plainly written than in the changes they produced upon the density, distribution and industrial character of the population. The new methods of production rapidly increased the wealth of the country and—in spite of the crushing burdens of the war with France—made possible the support of far greater numbers of people. In the five decades between 1764 and 1814 the population increased more than it had done in the previous five centuries. England and Wales now held nearly eleven million inhabitants.

The services of the bulk of the population were utilised for the new industries. We find in 1814 that something like two-thirds of the people have become industrial and urban in character, while only one-third remain agricultural and rural. Lancashire and the West Riding rival London in the density of the population that has swarmed northwards to the sources of national prosperity.

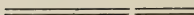
Such rapid transformations in industry and population had far-reaching consequences, many of which are still working themselves out at the present day. The production of wealth having become dependent on machinery, society was sharply divided into the two classes representing Capital and Labour, those who owned and those who worked the instruments of production. The enclosure of the common-fields robbed the labourer of his last stake in the soil. The mass of the population, divorced henceforward from both land and capital, became a propertyless proletariat, dependent for the means of subsistence on the class who owned the wealth. And in the swelling urban areas, which this new industrial population created, arose a thousand new problems of "capital versus labour," poverty, unemployment, low wages, housing, etc., that were the inevitable outcome of the changed conditions. So unforeseen and so incredibly swift were these developments that they found the people of England totally unprepared to deal with them. Parliament, having nothing better in its armoury than mediæval weapons, was advised by the philosophers and economists of the age to leave things alone. These thinkers saw quite truly that the old regulations in discipline of trade were not adapted to the new conditions that were arising; they knew also that Parliament at that time was so corrupt and incapable that its interference would probably lead to more harm than good. These practical considerations probably encouraged them to build up their exaggerated philosophy of the wickedness of all Government Interference, and to push their plea for the "liberty of the individual" beyond all the bounds of commonsense. Their reasonings carried the day. Laissez-Faire triumphed. Let us look at some of its results.

One half of all those employed in the new cotton factories in the first quarter of a century were children under sixteen; one-sixth were children under nine. Sir Robert Peel declared in the House that it was not uncommon for little children of not more than six to be torn from their beds and compelled to work fifteen or sixteen hours a day. When Peel attempted to legislate, he was told that the evil did not exist or that it was greatly exaggerated; that the prosperity of the nation depended on the cotton industry and that legislation would paralyse it; that he was interfering with the rights of the parents and with the freedom of labour; that it was difficult to say how far this might be carried; that it would make the workers discontented and lead them to combine together. It was not till 1819 that an Act was passed—in the teeth of the orthodox economics and of the business interests—which forbade the labour of children under nine in factories. In 1829, Robert Owen passed an almost identical measure, which would seem to prove that the previous legislation was a dead letter. This Act in its turn was largely inoperative.

Children were employed by the manufacturers because the new labour required was mostly unskilled and because children were cheap. The abuse of child-labour, coming with the rapid increase of population, led to the most terrible poverty and distress. The price of wheat was considerably over 80s. a quarter. Wages for adult male workers averaged considerably less than two shillings a day. (In 1834, six agricultural labourers were transported for joining a union, after their wages had been reduced from ten to seven shillings a week.) About one-sixth of the whole population was receiving help from the poor rate. The workers begged Parliament to put in force the Elizabethan Act which directed justices to fix wages, but the manufacturers represented that such a course would ruin their trade, and in 1813 the Act was repealed. Unemployment, owing to the sudden and fitful expansion of trade, was terrible. In 1811 a petition of no fewer than 40,000 operatives

in Manchester stated that the majority of those employed in machine-industry were not getting three days' work in the week. In the same year, 7,000 cotton spinners and weavers in Bolton piteously informed Parliament that not more than two-thirds of their looms were working and that those employed could not earn more than five shillings a week. A Parliamentary Committee was appointed to consider these grievances. Its Report was issued promptly. "The suggestions submitted for consideration by the petitioners are exposed to insuperable objections; no interference of the legislature with the freedom of trade or with the perfect liberty of every individual to dispose of his time and of his labour in the way and on the terms which he may judge most conducive to his own interest, can take place without violating general principles of the first importance to the prosperity and happiness of the community."

The hours of work were far longer than at present; the conditions of employment were often unspeakably filthy and insanitary, and were totally unregulated by law; combinations of workpeople to improve their conditions were prohibited; practically the whole of the middle and working classes were still excluded from representation in Parliament. Crimes of the most trivial character were punished with brutal ferocity. Not a penny was spent by the Government on education, health or the general welfare of the community. Local Government, designed for tiny communities, practically broke down under the sudden swelling of the population. It seems probable that this period marks the lowest depth of degradation and misery ever reached by the people of this country.





# England Fifty Years Ago.

## Recovering from the Shock of the Industrial Revolution.

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The horrible conditions of existence outlined in the foregoing section were perpetuated for many years after 1814. Then, little by little, knowledge accumulated, political and administrative machinery was built up, legislation was passed, and by 1864 a far more promising social order had been established, the worst of the old evils were swept away, and modern England had come into being.

The industrial evolution of the country has proceeded as we might anticipate that it would. The steam-engine has been put upon wheels to draw railway trains, and used at sea to propel ships. The penny post has been established. Telegraphic communication is set up all over the country, and in 1866 England and America have been linked by a cable. These facilities for the conduct of business and the transit of goods made it possible for English capitalists to carry on their operations on a scale of ever-increasing size and complexity. Capital accumulated. Between 1814 and 1864 the old conception of a self-sufficing nation was frankly repudiated. Free Trade was established. We came to depend on other countries for our supplies of food and raw materials, and in return we sent our manufactures to the ends of the earth. Compared with any earlier period in our history, we were fabulously rich.

The increase in the national accumulations made possible a further gigantic growth in the population. The census of 1861 recorded twenty millions as the total number of people for England and Wales—nearly double what it had been in 1811. Of this number only one-fifth were now employed in agriculture.

Spencer Walpole remarks that "the wealth of the upper and middle classes increased twice as rapidly as the numbers of the population," but by 1864, in different degrees, all classes were sharing in the general prosperity. The workers had been grudgingly allowed to have their Unions, and at this period some 200,000 workers were organised to improve the conditions under which they laboured. The Co-operative Movement boasted of 120,000 members. The Corn Laws had been abolished in 1846, and the prices of all the necessaries of life stood far lower than they had done fifty years before. Wages, on the other hand, had gone up. Hours of labour for men were reduced to some sixty a week.

Most important of all, perhaps, in its ultimate consequences, was the steadily increasing disposition of the State to interfere in the industrial and social life of the people. Such interference dealt with crying evils; it was

never a consistent policy; it was reluctant and spasmodic; it was always performed with an apology and an air of finality. But it went on, urged by humanitarian considerations against which even the opposition of the capitalists was powerless. Economic theory was also swinging round to a qualified support of State interference.

This new policy was further strengthened by the partial democratisation of the machinery of government effected by the Reform Act of 1832. This Act gave the country getting on for one-and-a-half million upper-class voters by the year 1864. It was followed in 1867 by the Second Reform Act, which enfranchised the bulk of the working-classes and doubled the electorate. But in spite of these democratic movements, which even such progressive thinkers as Bagehot feared might plunge the country into chaos, it was long before Parliament began to take upon itself the responsibility of any extensive interference with the conditions of industry. In 1864 the law had got no further than some piece-meal regulations for the restriction of hours and the fencing of machinery; it concerned itself only with women and children; it applied almost exclusively to textile factories. Of what we call "social legislation" there were only the tiniest beginnings. Education was still carried on by private enterprise, supplemented by niggardly grants from the State; probably about one-half of the whole population could neither read nor write. Nor had attention to the health of the community progressed much further; but the various Acts which had reconstituted local government facilitated the treatment of problems of housing and public health by local bodies.

In 1864 this nation was in a much happier state than it had been in 1814. Judged, however, by almost any other standard, it was in a deplorable condition.

# England To-Day.

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Not more than one-fifth of the population now live in rural districts; less than one man in ten is engaged in agriculture.

"Rural England," says Mr. Masterman, "is everywhere hastening to decay. No one stays there who can possibly find employment elsewhere. All the boys and girls with energy and enterprise forsake, at the commencement of maturity, the life of the fields for the life of the town. A peasantry, unique in Europe in its complete divorce from the land, lacking ownership of cottage or tiniest plot of ground, finds no longer any attraction in the cheerless toil of the agricultural labourer upon scant weekly wages."

Speaking of the normal social life, which mankind has maintained from primitive times, Mr. H. G. Wells says:—"It is the root-life. It rests upon the soil, and from that soil below and its reaction to the seasons and moods of the sky overhead, have grown most of the traditions, institutions, sentiments, beliefs, superstitions and fundamental songs and stories of mankind." In a few generations all that has been changed. Our national prosperity now rests upon coal and iron. The countryside is deserted. Agriculture can never again become the "root-life." However much we may deplore it, England has become an industrial and urban community.

The further development of the means of communication has brought this country into relations with other countries far more intimate than those which existed between one village and its neighbour a hundred years ago. For most purposes the world is now one undivided market. We buy and sell according to our fancy in any part of the globe, and the difficulty of communication and transit is almost negligible. A hundred years ago we were practically self-sufficing, and strenuous efforts were made by patriotic statesmen to keep us so. To-day, if the importation of foodstuffs from other countries should be cut off, we should scarcely survive long enough to make our wills. And if our supplies of raw material from abroad were to cease, every factory in England would lie idle in a few weeks.

In payment for the £600,000,000 worth of foodstuffs and raw materials we receive from other countries, we send to them the manufactured goods, to the making and carrying of which the majority of English people give their lives. By reason of the fact that the market for goods has become so enormous, what is called "large-scale production" has become the rule in manufacture. Vast quantities of articles of uniform pattern are required and supplied. Five million pens and 35,000,000 pins, for example, are turned out every day from Birmingham. Such miracles of production are, of course, dependent on the application of scientific knowledge to the processes of manufacture and to the thorough-going utilisation of labour-saving machinery. It is this use of the powers science has placed in our hands that has made possible the present

accumulations of wealth, so that to-day we are, man for man, a hundred or a thousand times as well off as we were a century and a half ago. In 1914 a cotton loom, attended by a man and two boys, produces as much as 4,000 workers could have done in 1764. It is solely because of this use of the forces that scientists are revealing to us that our standard of comfort has risen in each successive generation, so that to-day we can look with pity and horror on the conditions of life a century or more ago.

As the market for the sale of goods has increased in size, so the individual business has been also enlarged. "The typical unit of production is no longer a single family or a small group of persons working with a few, cheap, simple tools upon small quantities of material, but a compact and closely-organised mass of labour composed of hundreds or thousands of individuals, co-operating with large quantities of expensive and intricate machinery, through which passes a continuous and mighty volume of raw material on its journey to the hands of the consuming public." The small business tends to be replaced by the large. Monopoly tends to replace competition. The Trust has already almost become the typical method of production.

The divorce between Capital and Labour seems scarcely less decisive than it was at the opening of last century. On the one hand you have a small body of men owning the mass of the national accumulations, whether in the shape of land, machinery or other property; these wealthy capitalist-employers tend to become fewer in number, more powerful, and better organised. They have their trade unions, like their men; in 1912 there were 1,162 Masters' Associations for protecting the interests of capital as against those of labour. On the other hand, you have the mass of the population of this country, most of them with scarcely a penny in their pockets on the morning of pay-day. For a hundred years they have been organising among themselves, but the majority of workers are too poor or too apathetic to pay attention to the appeals of their shrewder comrades. Only some 3,500,000 manual workers (out of an army five times as great) are as yet enrolled in Unions; a majority of these, probably, are good for little except a strike; but nevertheless Trade Unionism is rightly looked upon by the worker as all-important in his struggle for life.

The divorce between Labour and Capital is the main cause of social discontent in our present civilisation. There is a constantly growing body of suggestions for uniting them once more (as in the Golden Age) in the bonds of holy matrimony. It seems to me that the employer of to-day is far more humane than he used to be. I gravely question, however, whether this huge, complex problem can ever be solved by haphazard experiments in philanthropic business enterprise or by schemes of profit-sharing. Perhaps the most hopeful movement, in which Labour and Capital do genuinely associate happily together, is that called Co-operation. In the Co-operative store each member buys his goods at the ordinary market prices and receives periodically a dividend proportionate to the extent of his purchases. By trading upon this simple method the Co-operative Movement has so greatly extended its scope that to-day no fewer than 3,000,000 working men and women are enrolled as members, and the Co-operative Wholesale, which supplies goods to the retail stores, is the largest private business in this country.

The Social Conditions prevalent are in the main a reflex of the industrial. It will be convenient to think of this community as a pyramid, in the apex of which we visualise "the upper classes," whom we say are "at the top," and in the lower strata of which we shall find the "lower classes" and "the bottom dog." In the very point of the pyramid is the small class of the

Very Rich—the Royal Family, Lords, Landowners, Capitalists. They are not by any means all of them "idle rich," but it is no exaggerated condemnation to say that in proportion to their opportunity they do not discharge their duty to the commonwealth. From this class we have a right to look for inspiration, governance and leadership. But we do not get them. "As a matter of fact," wrote Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb recently, "whatever may be said of the brain-working professional, it is the rarest of all exceptions for any wealthy property owner himself to give to the world either scientific research or artistic creation, to enrich us with musical composition or ennobling literature, or to widen or deepen our religious life." It was Lord Rosebery—speaking in circumstances which gave his utterance exceptional weight—who declared that not one hundred and fifty of the peers in the House of Lords were fit to exercise their privilege as legislators.

The Middle Class, which occupies the next stratum in the Social Pyramid, roughly comprises people with incomes between £5,000 a year (above which supertax is imposed) and £160 a year (below which income-tax is remitted). Here you have the bulk of your business and professional men—employers, farmers, well-to-do shopkeepers, lawyers, doctors, ministers of religion, writers, teachers, engineers. Most of the men who supply us with ideas, teach us and govern us, belong to the Middle Class. In his book on "The Condition of England," Mr. C. F. G. Masterman says: "It is the Middle Class which stands for England in most modern analyses." It is, almost certainly, the happiest class in the country. Except where it borders on the topmost stratum of the pyramid, it is free from the perils of excessive wealth; and, except where it borders on the stratum below it, it is free from the horrors of urgent poverty. It is saturated, no doubt, with narrow views and foolish prejudices; it is too fond of money and luxury; it is superficial and hurried and purposeless. But it is, on the whole, a kindly and hardworking class, promising to expand into the cultured community that is one day to be the people of England.

In a narrow section of the pyramid, bounded above by the Middle Class and below by the Manual Working Class, is a part of the community which has come into existence in the last fifty years. The members of this class constitute the lower ranks of our brain-working professions, and comprise many teachers, Government officials, clerks, assistants, journalists. These earn less than £160 a year, but they belong to the professional rather than to the manual-working class. It is estimated that no fewer than 3,000,000 persons are in this situation. Perhaps the struggle for existence is nowhere so bitterly felt as with the members of this class, and marriage is made almost prohibitive to them.

Next we have "the Masses": the great army of the working-classes who perform the manual toil—agricultural labourers, miners, transport workers, building operatives, factory hands, general labourers, shop assistants, servants, employees of public bodies. In this section of the community exist subsections clearly separated from one another. There are highly skilled, low skilled and unskilled workers. There is the "aristocracy of labour" and there are the "camp-followers." There are, in fact, no workers "in the mass." It is estimated that 6 per cent. of the male manual workers get 45s. a week or over, which means a little more than £100 a year; 7 per cent. get between 45s. and 40s.; 13 per cent. between 40s. and 35s.; 21 per cent. less than 35s. and more than 30s.; a further 21 per cent. less than 30s. and more than 25s. This makes 68 per cent. getting 25s. or over. The remaining one-third of the workers are getting less than 25s. a week, and of these 4 per cent. get less than 15s. and 8 per cent. less than 20s. So far as we can trust such

investigations as those of Mr. Charles Booth and Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, we may conclude that between one-third and one-half of the manual working-class is suffering such physical, mental and moral distress as is consequent upon an insufficiency of the bare necessities of life. And even the upper half of the working-class are at every point of their lives limited by their lack of house room, garden space and spare money.

To expect great political sagacity or robust virtue from a class so conditioned seems asking too much. What the investigator discovers is a happy-go-lucky indifference on the part of the mass of the workers to their own lot and to the lot of the race. They seem to have as good a time as they can with things as they are. Mr. Masterman writes as follows: "In Mr. Grayson, again, a certain type has become articulate; the 'Clarionette' with red tie, flannel shirt and bicycle, who has been moved to continuous anger by the vision of trampled women and starving children in the cities of plenty. Such men see the world transfigured in the light of a great crusade. They are convinced that by demonstration and violence to-day, or (at latest) to-morrow, 'the people' will rise in their millions and their might and pluck down the oppressors who are 'sucking their blood' and inaugurate the golden age of the Socialistic Millennium. But meantime 'the people' are thinking of almost everything but the Socialistic Millennium. They are thinking how to get steady work; of the iniquities of the foreigner; of the possibility or desirability of war, now with the Transvaal, now with Germany. They are thinking which horse is going to win in some particular race, or which football eleven will attain supremacy in some particular league. They are thinking that wife or child is ill or happy, of entertainment, of the pleasure in reminiscence of one past holiday, or the pleasure in anticipation of another."

The late Canon Barnett averred that the workers possess "the strenuousness and modesty which come by contact with hardship and the sympathy which comes by daily contact with suffering. They, as a class, are more unaffected, more generous, more capable of self-sacrifice than members of the other classes." He asserted that "the working class is the hope of the nation" and that "their moral qualities justify that hope."

There can be no question that, as compared with the worker of a hundred years ago, or even of fifty years ago, we have to-day a man awake and intelligent. "The first thing that has to be realised," says Mr. H. G. Wells, "if the Labour question is to be understood at all, is that the temper of Labour has changed altogether in the last twenty or thirty years. . . . The outlook of the workman has passed beyond the works and his beer and his dog. He has become—or, rather, he has been replaced by—a being of eyes, however imperfect, and of criticism, however hasty and unjust. The working man of to-day reads, talks, has general ideas and a sense of the round world; he is far nearer to the ruler of to-day in knowledge and intellectual range than he is to the working man of fifty years ago."

It seems to me, however, that it will be many years before the workers are sufficiently educated to use their political power for the good of the whole nation. During some investigations which I made in 1912 for the Town Council of Birmingham, I questioned a number of typical boy-workers in the city, aged about 17 or 18, concerning current political matters. Most of these boys were ignorant of the names of the present Prime Minister or of the present or late Leader of the Opposition. The only questions of which most of them knew anything whatever were the Insurance Act ("He's got my fourpence") and Votes for Women (which they had "seen at the Picture Palace"). In three or four years all of these boys will become fully-fledged

citizens—knowing no more than they do now about politics—but legally competent to govern your destiny and mine. They are, I believe, typical of more than half of the whole working class. The working class, which to-day has the overwhelming preponderance of political power, is not yet educated in a manner at all commensurate with its grave responsibility.

At the very base of the social pyramid we have a class of Social Failures numbering probably as many as the population of London. In this class may be included the perpetually and chronically under-employed, the casual workers, the sweated workers, beggars, tramps, criminals, prostitutes, wastrels, the feeble-minded, the physically incapacitated and the morally degenerate. These classes are parasitic upon those who perform the manual and intellectual work. In every imaginable way they are a terrible burden upon the rest of us. It is from them and their offspring that all the gravest of our educational and medical and criminal problems arise. It is they who poison the life of the whole community. Probably a good quarter of the national income goes by way of charity and taxation to the mere keeping alive of this unfortunate aggregation of "misérables."

The Government of this country has become democratic. In the House of Commons, elected by the people, resides the ultimate sovereignty. Our constitution is described by Mr. Leonard Courtney as "a republic, veiled in monarchical forms and containing in its organisation large survivals of aristocratic privilege." It is, of course, true that many men and all women are still excluded from citizenship, and that, by various specious arguments, it can be shown that our constitution is still deplorably undemocratic. Without pausing to consider these, we can assert beyond the possibility of contradiction that, as compared with any previous period in our history, we are to-day a democratic nation; and that if a majority of the people fail to make Parliament do as they require, this is not due to the inadequacies of our system of representation, so much as to their own economic circumstances and lack of education and energy.

And while we grumble at Parliament and Members of Parliament as cheerfully as we do at the weather, there seems no ground for believing that we shall scrap our present political machine in exchange for any substitute. Alter it we certainly shall; replace it, never. So far from attempting to overturn the present constitution or to get things done outside politics, the growing tendency with all of us is to rely upon Parliament. A century ago all the effective classes in the community were pleading with Parliament to leave things alone, and Parliament washed its hands of the nation. To-day, no matter in what political party or social stratum, the plea is for State Interference. The Conservative Party wants to use Parliament to effect far-reaching changes in our fiscal relations with other countries. The Labour Party is avowedly in favour of vastly increased interference with the whole tissue of our national life. The Liberal Party, since it came into power in 1906, has gaily thrown off all its Gladstonian traditions of *laissez-faire* and never hesitated to pass any measure merely because it meant an increase in the functions of the State. Sociological and economic opinion, for what it is worth, is well-nigh unanimous in supporting an extension of the sphere of State influence. And, whether we like it or loathe it, it appears to be as certain as the coming years that the rôle of the State in the developments of the future will be one of rapidly increasing consequence.

Already the State, in the management of the Post Office, conducts the largest single business concern in the country. It may not be many years distant before the State takes over and runs the railways and perhaps the

mines. So long ago as 1888 one of the Fabian Essays told us that the State "provides for many thousands of us from birth to burial—midwifery, nursery, education, board and lodging, vaccination, medical attendance, medicine, public worship, amusement and interment. It furnishes and maintains its own museums, parks, art galleries, libraries, concert halls, roads, streets, bridges, markets, slaughterhouses, fire engines, lighthouses, pilots, ferries, surf boats, steam tugs, lifeboats, cemeteries, public baths, washhouses, pounds, harbours, piers, wharves, hospitals, dispensaries, gasworks, waterworks, tramways, telegraph cables, allotments, cow-meadows, artisans' dwellings, schools, churches and reading rooms." In 1888 such a statement was more imposing than the realities to which it made reference. But to-day it represents not one-tenth of the extent of public activity. Actual supersession of private enterprise has been carried far; supervision of private enterprise has been carried much farther still. The State regulates conditions of labour, hours, wages, quality of goods, supply of labour. To the State we look increasingly for education and health, which are two of our most vital needs. Far-reaching proposals for the State to improve the housing of the whole populace, and regenerate town and country, are apparently regarded with equanimity by both the great political parties.

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## “Unrest.”

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In the light of the developments outlined in the foregoing sections of this paper, is it to be wondered at that there is unrest in England to-day? Of course, there is unrest. There has been unrest ever since Watt turned the steam-engine loose in our midst, like some terrific monster whose depredations we were powerless to prevent and whose chaining down we have still only in part effected.

For generation after generation, and age after age, the people of this country lived their life upon the soil; supplying with their own hands, from their own locality, the food and clothing, the fuel and shelter, which were all they had; living a slow, uneventful, unvarying existence; ignorant of the letters of the alphabet and of almost everything except their personal concerns in their own tiny area; accustomed to depend for all the business of government on their feudal or economic superiors.

And then, “swift as the lightning in the collied night,” this life is broken up. The use of steam-power and the development of communications increase beyond all belief the wealth of the country. Population expands and its needs multiply as it becomes possible for the resources of the country to meet larger demands. Around the steam-engine is built the factory; around the factory grows the town; in the town are gathered workers, doing work never done before in the history of mankind, in masses so huge that in the early part of last century leading Members of Parliament refused to believe their own census returns.

To the needs of this new industrial order and vast urban population, the old political and social framework was not adapted. A thousand re-adjustments had to be made before the machinery of government and the social system could be fitted to the new order of things. What placed this task beyond the power of our great-grandfathers was mainly the lack of knowledge of what to do. The political and economic science of the time was largely erroneous. Those in charge of the government of the country were torn between the reasonings of the economists and the cries of despair from the multitude. And it was not until they reluctantly turned a deaf ear to the economists that we began to march forward to a more hopeful state of things. And to-day we are still settling down. Social science is still in its childhood. We are still experimenting. We go on with this herculean task of building up a political and social régime appropriate to the new industrial order, and we shall do well if we lay the perturbed spirit of unrest within the limits of the twentieth century.

Turning from the historical to what would be called the existing causes of unrest, it seems to me that the fundamental reason of it is the inequality of wealth. In past ages this has not been keenly felt. But to-day we have

democracy. So far as political right goes, every man is, roughly speaking, the equal of every other man. The principle of equality is being carried also into the spheres of justice, religion, and, indeed, into all our everyday concerns. The elementary school and the cheap press have given the workers education sufficient to enable them to grasp the general condition of affairs; many of them by self-training are better educated on social questions than members of the upper classes. Thus, M. Viviani suggests, the worker "compares with sadness his political power with his economic dependence; humiliated every day with the contrast between his divided personality—on one side a *misérable*, on the other a sovereign; on one an animal, on the other a god."

There are, of course, many secondary causes of the unrest, but this inequality of wealth is the underlying cause to which most of the others stand affiliated. The bulk of the people of this country are poor, many of them very poor indeed. And yet, statisticians assure us, we are a wealthy country, and our national resources are sufficient to provide for all, the comforts of life. Behind all this vague unrest lies the desire of the poorer classes—and of many members of the richer classes—for a more equitable distribution of the wealth of the country. It is this widespread feeling which is giving birth to "social legislation."

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## The Stream of Tendencies.

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Under this heading I propose to sum up the leading changes of the last century and a half, so that we can see upon what lines future developments may be anticipated.

1. Most important of all changes has been the supersession of man's own muscles by steam and electrical power in the satisfaction of man's needs. Increase of power over Nature is the basic difference between the new life and the old. The application of extra-human power and the use of machinery has made possible the sustentation of a population eight times as large as this island could support in 1764. But we are not merely eight times as wealthy as our great-great-grandfathers, but eight hundred or eight thousand times. The artisan of to-day enjoys unnumbered decencies and comforts that were undreamt of in the philosophy of the "nabob" of George III.'s time. We have lighting, drainage, sanitation, varied diet, medical attendance, education, postal service, newspapers, books, entertainment, roads, railways, steamers—all of them incomparably superior to the possibilities open to any social class a century and a half ago. Even the homes of the workers, wretched as they often are, are superior to all kinds of habitations in times past, except those of the wealthy gentry—superior even to these in many respects.

There are some "simple-life" reformers who would have us go back to the year 1764 and build our civilisation again without machinery. They hold machinery to be the devil which must be cast out before men and women will again "fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the Golden Age." To me such a policy seems neither possible nor desirable. It is rather like a literal acceptance of the dictum to "become as a little child"—as if this meant that a grown-up man should endeavour by the use of gin or the knife to reduce himself to the physical proportions of an infant. What the maxim means is that the grown-up person should reproduce with the full force of his mature powers the spontaneous virtues of the child. And so with this machine-power that science has given us as a nation. To win social salvation there is no call for us to endeavour to get rid of it again. "O! 'tis excellent to have a giant's strength." We are only "tyrannous" to-day because we "use it like a giant." What we have to do is to build our great State firm upon the basis of machine-power, and, by every means we know of, increase the power and develop the machines.

2. While the increasing use of machinery will probably make it possible in the future to satisfy all the needs of humanity at the cost of far less human labour, it would seem unreasonable to suppose, as a school of land-reformers do, that we may again become a nation of tillers of the soil. In this country

we have abandoned that life, as a basis of national prosperity, for ever. Our wealth depends upon coal, iron, cotton, wool, steel, hardware, ships, chemicals and so forth. We must do what Nature has given us the greatest facilities for doing, and exchange our products with other nations, in order to supply our elementary needs. We cannot abandon manufacture. We must be an industrial country. But at the same time we shall do well to remember that there is historical vigour in that effete formula "Back to the land." We have lived on the land from the earliest times, spade in hand, with the smell of the soil in our nostrils and the verdure of the fields before our eyes. The town-life is new for us; we long for green pastures and still waters. So it is, that while three-quarters of the population are compelled by iron laws to continue at industrial occupations, there is a powerful tendency at work to ruralise our urban areas. Indeed, it may be said that one of the most vital problems of present-day statesmanship is the regeneration of urban life by intermingling with its blackness the green of the country.

3. The gigantic increase in the population of this island and the aggregation of densely-packed masses of individuals in small areas, where ideas could circulate freely and organisation proceed easily, has been largely responsible for the rapid subjection of the Parliamentary machine to democratic control in the last hundred years. In 1864, Parliamentary government was in the hands of an exceedingly small minority of wealthy people. The franchise was conferred in 1832 on the upper and middle classes; in 1867 on the town-workers; and in 1884 on the lodger and the agricultural labourer. It seems certain that the next few years will witness further triumphs of the democratic principle in the abolition of the plural vote and the enfranchisement of women. The democratic principle is that one person is as good as another. It may be dismissed as ridiculous, but it is the only practicable basis of representation. It carries with it the far-reaching corollary that as government is carried on by a number of individuals, each as good as his or her neighbour, so it should be for the benefit of all individuals, one equally with another—"Government of the people" and "Government for the people." This principle takes each year a firmer hold upon the imagination of the electorate, and we must anticipate a steady output of "democratic" legislation, whether Mr. Lloyd George is in office or in his grave.

4. At the beginning of last century we found an undemocratic Government engaged in not governing the country. Practically the whole of its attention was absorbed in preventing Buonaparte from landing on these shores and in "putting down" social disturbances. Industrial and social conditions were, however, so terrible that, against its own beliefs and desires, Parliament, especially as it became more democratic, was obliged to pass measure after measure to mitigate the varied evils to which the people of this country were exposed. In the last fifty years or so there has thus been built up a voluminous and complex code of regulations affecting the whole of our life as a community. This policy of State control has been forced upon us by practical, not by theoretical, considerations. But it now has behind it a large and influential body of thought, and it may almost be said to have become part of our mental texture in our attitude to social problems. We no longer argue the question whether the State ought or ought not to do a certain thing. The ground of contention shifts to the desirability or necessity or cost of the particular extension of State interference contemplated.

There are, indeed, a few bold critics who declare that all State interference is a mistake and that the legislative developments of the last century are one and all misguided, and that the result of continued State interference will, sooner or later, be nemesis. In reply, we can retort that with

the most elaborate regulation from outside, "the Lancashire cotton mill, in point of technical efficiency, still leads the world"; that health, education and comfort have all increased cheek by jowl with the increase in State interference; and that there is no shred of proof that there has been any undermining of the moral fibre of the nation on which in the last resort its prosperity depends.

Let me make three quotations from writers representing different schools of thought to emphasise this contention:—

Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, pessimistic though he is about the present, avows that "Certainly by all tangible and material tests—income, prices, security, comfort, addition to leisure and wages—the bulk of the people of this country have advanced so incredibly since the 'Hungry Forties' that the reality of those days would appear to the present generation but as bad dreams."

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, more thoroughly informed, perhaps, on the social conditions of both 1814 and of 1914 than any other investigators, state: "Viewed in centuries, our nation is certainly on the up-grade. A hundred years ago the condition of the great mass of the people was deplorable in the extreme. We know of hardly any evil of to-day that was not in 1813 relatively more prevalent and more destructive. . . . Dreary as the outlook may seem to the pessimist of to-day, the outlook in 1813 was infinitely more hopeless. . . . If we could bring to life our ancestor of 1813, who instinctively assumed that nothing could be changed, he would be staggered at the 'impossibilities' that have come to pass. He would see at once that the community, taken as a whole, stood on a higher level than a century ago."

Finally, Mr. H. G. Wells: "Looked at too closely, (life) may seem to be that—a mere formless web of individual hates and loves; but detach oneself a little, and the broader forms appear. One perceives that something goes on that is constantly working to make order out of casualty, beauty out of confusion; justice, kindness, mercy out of cruelty and inconsiderate pressure. . . . In spite of all the confusions and thwartings of life, the hates and resiliencies, and counterstrokes of fate, it is manifest that in the long run human life becomes broader than it was, gentler than it was, finer, deeper. On the whole—and nowadays almost steadily—*things get better*. There is a secular amelioration of life, and it is brought about by Good Will working through the efforts of men."

# Industrial Developments.

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How will the Industrial Revolution end? A hundred years ago the business world was made up of a myriad small firms, unscrupulous, in their desire for profit, whether this came from their own enterprise or from the sweating of their workpeople. With this "free competition," on which it was held that the integrity of industrial and national supremacy depended, neither State nor Trade Union interfered.

To-day the business-world still has its host of small firms, but the typical firm is to-day the big business and the trust. Everywhere we see combination replacing competition, as small firms amalgamate together or are absorbed by the large. A comparatively small body of men, the "captains of industry" have control over great masses of capital and are in a very real sense "the Masters."

On their side, the workers have been organising. Not only have they become stronger by reason of improved conditions of life and training, but also because they have built up powerful, national organisations, the Trade Unions, by which they are able to bring pressure to bear upon the employers, equal perhaps to any pressure the employers can bring to bear upon them. Through their Co-operative Stores, moreover, the workers have to a certain extent learnt to supply themselves with many of the necessaries of life and to free themselves to that extent from dependence upon the capitalist classes.

The same principle of direct provision for need, or control of the goods produced by the consumer who uses them, inspires a great and growing volume of national and local public enterprise. We supply ourselves with hundreds of things (trams, books, baths, doctors, gas, water, electricity and even milk) which used at one time to be run only for private profit-making. I believe it would be no exaggeration to say that a majority of the people in this country would welcome State ownership of both the railways and the mines. It is obvious that this extension of public activity represents a tremendous encroachment upon the field of private capitalistic enterprise. And even where the State does not oust the private owner, it obliges him to accept a comprehensive code of obligations before it will allow him to carry on his activities. This regulation of private enterprise increases as rapidly as public ownership.

Thus we have the harassed business-man struggling, so he tells us, to make sufficient profit to keep body and soul together. We have the employees struggling to get higher wages, better conditions of work and even the control of industry itself. And we have the public, or consumers, struggling to get their everyday needs supplied in some better and cheaper manner than present conditions offer.

Every newspaper brings us news of a battle between the various combatants in this industrial warfare. It is still a matter of conjecture with whom the ultimate victory will lie. Syndicalists, like Mr. Tom Mann, will tell you that the workers will take over the industries of the country. Socialists, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, believe the State will become the master-manufacturer and distributor. Anti-Socialists, like Mr. Malloch, believe that the trust-magnates will obtain increasing authority in politics as well as in industry. We may all believe what we want to believe. Perhaps the next decade will bring us to a standpoint where it will be much easier to forecast the ultimate working out of the Industrial Revolution.

## The Inevitable Social Policy.

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The word "inevitable" is rather too bold a term, but I cannot find a less assertive and sufficiently synonymous substitute. I mean to try in this section of the pamphlet to outline the social policy which I believe to be inevitable because conditions make it so. It is the policy graven deep in the happenings of the last hundred years; the stream of tendencies forces it upon us. The proposals which follow are not the property of any one school of thought; to their partial realisation all political parties have already contributed much; to their more complete realisation we may be quite sure that all parties will contribute still more in the future. I have tried in what follows not to *invent* anything, but only to *discover* what measures circumstances are forcing upon us in our emergence to a higher stage of civilisation. Errors in details are unavoidable; so far as possible I have discreetly kept to the safer ground of generalisation.

What the New Social Order will be like, we may leave to our imaginative writers to pourtray. The building of it is a task for our children and our children's children as well as for ourselves. We shall do well if in our time we can gain a sure comprehension of the problems involved and hazard some experimental solutions. It will take us years and generations of patient, constructive effort before order and contentment replace the seething discontents that invade every phase of modern life. There will be disorder after disorder, and crisis after crisis, before we settle down in the coming civilisation.

Although we cannot foresee the details of future social conditions, it will help us considerably in our constructive work if we can gain even the most general conception of what lies ahead of us and what changes we must initiate. What we all want, with differing earnestness, is a race of fine, capable, strong men and women. We want Character; we want Ability; we want Health. But in order to get these things we must create the necessary environment. That environment must include Healthy Conditions of Life, the greatest facilities for Education, sufficient Material Comforts, and Leisure for individual pursuits. All these things hang together like the arcs of a circle. It is unwise to give leisure without giving education; it is impossible to educate without providing a foundation of physical health; we shall never get adequate incomes until people are healthy and capable enough to deserve them.

We shall find as we look into things that we have long recognised, albeit subconsciously, that we must pursue some such social policy. We have been for many years providing what some writers call a "National Minimum" of Wage, Education, Health and Leisure. The suggestions made in this pamphlet are the "Inevitable Social Policy"; they are in every case mere extensions of principles already tried and not found wanting.

## Babies.

It is too obvious to need emphasis that our future as a race depends upon the quality of the babies that are being born to us. It is the alleged deterioration in the quality of the birth-supply that is causing such grave disquietude with all the more careful students of our social conditions. The birth-rate is declining, and *it is declining most in those sections of the community which we most desire to increase*. The standard of comfort in a family (including the quality of the upbringing given to the children) depends upon the total income as dividend and the number of the family as divisor. Parents of the middle and superior-artisan classes are refusing to lower their standard of comfort by increasing the number of their children beyond a few. Such considerations do not, unfortunately, weigh with the members of the lowest classes, and with them large families are still the rule. It is obvious that if this balance is not redressed we shall have by the year 2,000, not a Great State, but the downfall of civilisation. "We must eliminate the Yahoo" (runs Mr. Bernard Shaw's fiat), "or his vote will wreck the commonwealth."

We can—and I myself think we should—make it impossible for feeble-minded and similarly degenerate men and women to have children at all, but such measures will leave the main problem untouched. Mr. Wells suggests the public endowment of motherhood as the practical solution of the difficulty and would increase his grant proportionally to the social standing of the parent. "People of that excellent class, which spends over a hundred a year on each child, ought to get about that much from the State, and people of the class which spends five shillings a week per head on them would get about that and so on." And he affirms that the endowment of motherhood is a plain and simple idea for which the mind of the man in the street has now been "very completely prepared." Mr. Wells sees plainly enough that the only way by his method to encourage the good births relatively to the inferior is by the graded payments he speaks of. Public opinion is prepared for the thirty shillings of the Insurance Act, etc., and for the statesmanlike remissions of Income Tax granted under the Budget of 1909; but it is far from being "very completely prepared" for any such elaborate and costly scheme as Mr. Wells puts forward.

It seems to me that the only way to improve the birth supply is to raise by every means in our power the whole level of life throughout the community. This can be done by the simple extension of principles already admitted and practised. We come back, then, to our social programme of elevating the standard of citizenship by improving the conditions under which people live. A direct or ultimate result of every proposal that follows will be the improvement of the birth supply.

## Healthy Conditions.

Nature's prescription for the prevention and cure of all forms of disease is of the kind that he who runs may read. Fresh air, wholesome food, pleasant work, sufficient rest, harmonious relations with one's circumstances. Existing conditions, more especially in our towns, compel us to violate every one of these simple rules. We breathe foul air sixteen times every minute; we take unwholesome food and drink four times every day; jarring noises are for ever filling our ears and unlovely sights, our eyes. The fundamental condition of health and happiness for us as an urban community is to make our towns habitable. For two generations and more we have been busily digging and hammering and cleaning to keep our towns decent. We are getting adequate lighting, proper drainage, pure water, clean



roads ; we have removed the worst of the filth ; improved the houses ; sweetened the factories. We must go forward with this work until we have purified every cubic inch of air, opened a path for the sun's rays into every window, cleared away all the vile slums and insanitary habitations, filled the city with trees and flowers, gardens and parks, insisted on the supply of wholesome food and drink, and made every person aware that they cannot be godly unless they are clean.

Such provisions as we have already made for assistance to the mother in the hour of her trial need amplification. It is a scandal that a woman should be able to continue at her work in a factory until almost the moment of delivery, and return to it within a week or two of the birth. It is a scandal that there should be so inadequate a provision of medical and other assistance just before and after the birth of the child. It is a scandal that, owing to the lack of pure milk and other necessaries, one child out of every eight in our towns and one out of every four in our slums should die within a year of birth. We are beginning to grapple with these evils. The Insurance Act gives its thirty shillings and medical aid. Many municipalities are instituting their Health Visitors, Baby Clinics, Schools for Mothers, Milk Depôts, etc. But we need an enormous extension of such measures before the majority of our infants reach the gates of the Elementary School free from mental and physical deficiencies.

At school, we had till recently nothing but inspection ! Inspection revealed such widespread defects that further action became necessary. Treatment is now following upon inspection, and the State has made grants to local bodies for the setting up of school clinics. Meals, clothing and boots are being provided for the necessitous children. Physical training is playing a larger part in the regular curriculum. All these measures for the physical welfare of the children are doubling the value of the Council School.

Unfortunately this bodily training is not continued during adolescence, which is the very period of life that requires it most. If the boys and girls of this country, between fourteen and eighteen, could spend a third of their time in swimming, running, gardening, dancing, drilling, etc., how enormously it would improve the physique of the young mothers and fathers, and the physical proportions of their children !

## Education.

The Education Act of 1870 made education universal and compulsory. Under the provisions of that Act every child in this country is secured at least a minimum of education between infancy and adolescence. The body of the Elementary Education, which is all that most of our future citizens receive, consists of the three R's. Considering the disgraceful remuneration awarded teachers in State schools, the enormous size of the classes, the inadequacies of the curriculum, etc., etc., it is astonishing that the results of this system are so promising.

At twelve or fourteen, the boy or girl leaves the school, and, in most cases, comes into no further contact with any organisation, philanthropic, religious or educational, which would continue the training he or she was getting at school. Just at the very moment when the sex instinct becomes very prominent, when senses, emotions and passions are all abnormally keen, when circumstances are all powerful for good or for evil, the boy or girl passes out of the hands of the teachers and goes forth into the world. Instead of school there are the long hours and unsavoury influences of workshop and factory, providing no training for body or mind. Leisure is spent in the

streets, at the Picture Palace or Music Hall, or in reading comics and bloods. The work of the elementary school is undone. The neat, industrious scholar becomes an untidy loungeur, who develops in his or her turn into an inefficient worker, a wretched father and husband or mother and wife and a poor citizen. This "manufacture of inefficiency" will go on so long as the golden years of adolescence, which nature intended for the training of womanhood and manhood, are stolen for immediate commercial profit.

Here is the first crying need in education. We must utilise the four years between childhood and manhood in continued training for the whole community, and not merely for certain sections of it. At least we could rescue half or a third of the time of youth for this purpose. The training should be primarily directed to the building up of the physique, and should certainly include gardening. It ought to embrace instruction upon that sex instinct, on the understanding of which the marriage and home and children of the future depend. There could be plenty of games, the reading of standard fiction and a wise use of the cinematograph. We should give instruction at this period on all those matters upon which these young men and women will be required to vote within a few years. A certain amount of training for work is perhaps possible in the case of boys. The business of life for most girls is being a wife and a mother, and during her youth, she ought to be trained to these activities.

Measures of this sort would do more for the welfare of this nation than any other single set of reforms. In nothing has the present Government been so deplorably at fault as in its almost total failure to improve our educational system. And if the proposed beggarly hour or two a week for technical training is the extent of their programme to meet the nation's need, whatever else they may have done, they will have failed in the field where action is most urgently necessary.

We must not only improve our educational system for the boys and girls of the poorer classes. We must organise and pay for research. And, it seems to me, we must make our universities far more integral in our social system than they are at present. I hold great hopes of the modern town university. It ought to be the very heart and soul and mind of the town. It ought to be undertaking the investigations that are precedent to all successful civic action; it ought to stimulate thought and inspire activity, as well as provide mere routine training for workers and students. At present the English University is not hated nor admired; it is simply not taken notice of. It is not a force in the life of the town or nation. What we want is more liberal endowments; salaries adequate to attract the best men and women; and above all a more "universal" spirit in those who carry on the university education.

There is one pregnant development of university culture on which I would like to dwell. A movement was started some few years ago called the Workers' Educational Association to provide education for adult working men and women. The universities have taken up this movement in the most sympathetic spirit, with the result that "Tutorial Classes" have been started in connection with every University in England. The University provides the tutor and the books for these classes; the students decide on the subject they will study. Each student undertakes to attend the class for a period of three years, to come regularly, and to do such study and written work as the tutor shall require. Twenty-four meetings of the class are held every year, one each week through the winter months. The first hour is taken up with a lecture by the tutor; the second hour with open discussion. The results of such a course are remarkable. Working men and women are

learning to think wisely, to speak clearly and to write expressively. This is a movement which deserves the most careful attention from those who are interested in social and educational questions. There are already some hundred and fifty of these classes established, and the number of the "W.E.A." students is growing with great rapidity. The Board of Education has done its utmost to make the culture given through this movement, deep as well as wide-spread. It seems to me to be one of the most promising instruments we have for building up the New Social Order.

## The Remedy for Unemployment.

Unless there is "work for all," there will never be income for all. It is for that reason that I introduce this question at this point. The "Unemployed Problem" is one of the greatest practical urgency. Unemployment throws its shadow over the whole field of industry. No worker escapes it; most workers suffer from it periodically; an exceedingly large fraction of the workers are chronically and perpetually subject to it. In nearly all cases it means transitory or continuous deprivation of the necessaries of life; the impairing of the worker's efficiency; the undermining of the mother's vitality; and the stunting of the lives of the growing children. It is impossible for us to build up a healthy state unless we can provide regular occupation for all those who are anxious for it.

To comprehend this problem of unemployment we must recognise at the outset that it is exceedingly complicated—so complicated that it is only in the last decade that we have obtained a fairly complete understanding of it.

There are three kinds of Unemployment :—

(i) Cyclical Unemployment.—The volume of unemployment in the country varies over a period of years as trade expands and contracts. Trade is at its worst one year, slightly better the next, better still the year after, good the fourth year, booming the fifth year, booming again the next year, not quite so good in the seventh year, getting bad in the eighth, worse still in the ninth, and at its worst again at the close of the decade. Statistics prove that it has run in cycles of that nature, roughly lasting for ten years each, for the last seventy or eighty years. We are just now at the very crest of a wave of prosperity—which is not in the slightest degree due to the Liberal Government or to Mr. Lloyd George's 1909 Budget.

(ii) Seasonal Unemployment.—In every occupation the amount of employment varies at different seasons of the year, according to the conditions of weather, light, temperature and fashion.

(iii) Casual Unemployment.—In addition to the unemployment caused by cyclical and seasonal variations in trade, there are, of course, numbers of workers thrown out of work for a variety of casual reasons.

There are five different kinds of unemployed :—

(i) The men from permanent situations, e.g. the butler who loses his post "on account of the Budget."

(ii) The men of discontinuous employment, e.g. building operatives and navvies, the work of whom is periodically interrupted by spells of idleness, during which they are searching for a new job.

(iii) The under-employed, e.g. the "docker," who never gets perhaps more than three or four days' work in the week, or the ordinary "casual" about town. Very large numbers of women belong to this class.

(iv) The unemployables who can't work, because of physical and mental defects.

(v) The unemployables who won't work, because of moral defects.

The whole of the machinery for dealing with this evil of unemployment, must be built upon the Labour Exchanges. In relation to each of the five classes of unemployed, the Labour Exchange has a function. The men from permanent situations, who have a specialised skill, by registering at the Exchange, which is in touch with all the other Exchanges, have the maximum chance of getting a new job. The men of discontinuous employment, through the offices of the Exchange, have far more chance of getting continuous work than previously; they can even arrange for their new job before they finish the old. When the potentiality of the Exchange is fully developed, it seems certain that a great amount of the under-employment and casual employment round docks, etc., can be abolished; a smaller number of workers can be given regular employment at the cost of squeezing out some of those now under-employed. And, finally, the Labour Exchanges will, when they are more generally used, reveal to us both types of unemployable. The man whom employers repeatedly reject or the man who repeatedly rejects employers, will become known to the officials of the Exchange, and marked off as not fitted for the regular Labour Market.

This use of the Labour Exchanges obviously does not solve the problem of unemployment. It secures regular work to most of the workers, but at the cost of leaving a small surplus of men and women with no employment at all. The next question then is, how to absorb this surplus.

(a.) We must reduce the hours of labour. I shall discuss the larger aspects of this suggestion later on. Here it is only necessary to note that if we reduce the working day of eight men from ten hours to eight, we shall, other things being equal, give ten men work in place of eight. There is room for a great absorption of labour into the transport industries, into shop work, into agriculture and other industries, where the hours worked, as a rule, are unmercifully long.

(b.) We must, above all, reduce the hours of juvenile labour. Emphasis has already been laid upon the urgency of this reform as a preliminary to an adequate system of national education. But it is also urgent as a means of providing work for adult workers. Most of the work of to-day is unskilled, and can be done as easily and well by juveniles as by adults. Employers use the cheaper labour to the full extent of the supply. The removal of each boy or girl from the labour market would be met by the absorption of an unemployed adult.

(c.) We must make public provision for women left with children, through the death or desertion of the husband. Under existing circumstances, such women compete in the Labour Market, accept low wages, turn a man out of work, and leave their children at home neglected. The State would find it cheaper to do what the more enlightened Boards of Guardians are already doing—give each such woman a widowhood pension on condition that she stays at home and looks after her children. Proper machinery should be set up to make the defaulting husband, in case of desertion, pay a part or the whole of the pension.

These measures will, it is believed, absorb most of the unemployed at times of normal or good trade. Further provision must be made for the few worst years of the trade-cycle. The remedy here suggested, hinges upon the fact that the Central Government and Local Bodies have become exceedingly large employers of labour. Orders for public work, moreover, need not in many cases be carried out with such immediacy as those given to private firms. If Parliament would each year ear-mark a few million pounds' worth of work, save this up, and put it upon the market when unemployment was getting serious, this would provide honest occupation for

hundreds of thousands. In the same way Local Bodies can hold back the making of a new road, the creation of new buildings, etc. for a year or two, and so supplement the efforts of the central departments. Such measures, which are already contemplated and partially in operation, would reduce the unemployed problem to small proportions in times of good and bad trade. State Insurance, the Training of workers whose trade is gone for Small Holdings, Emigration, etc., would leave us with no problem at all, except that of the unemployables who can't work and the unemployables who won't work. Their case will be considered later.

## The Minimum Wage.

At the present time only a small minority of people in this wealthy country possess an income sufficient to provide themselves with comfort. The fundamental cause of unrest is the desire of the poorer classes in the community to obtain larger incomes. The motives prompting this desire are bad as well as good, but it will be admitted that a sufficient income is indispensable to healthy, happy and even virtuous life. I am certain that until this desire is satisfied, there will never be an end to Social Unrest.

Could Society secure to every one of its members an adequate income it would put an end to an incredible amount of human suffering. It would lead to an improvement in the physique, capacity and morals of all classes in society. It would increase the productive power of the nation, not only by improving the efficiency of the workers, but by setting a premium upon enterprise and energy, and so getting rid of those incompetent employers, who can only keep going by sweating their workpeople. Perhaps its greatest virtue would be that it would enable us to abolish all these despicable State doles and degrading private charities:—Old Age Pensions, Free Meals, Holiday Funds, Special Collections, etc., etc., along with all the machinery of inspection and officialism that they necessitate. I believe in the State making its provision for the great public services of Health and Education, and for the general regulation of the nation's concerns, but what we want is a nation of men and women who are able and free to provide for their own needs.

The phrase "Minimum Wage," is necessarily vague. The Trade Union Minimum differs from the trade to trade and within the same industry from one locality to another; and it differs again markedly from what the State is trying to establish in the sweated industries. Such differences are inevitable. The Minimum must vary. But we ought to see to it that all workers in this country, in return for satisfactory work, have a sufficient income to provide the necessaries and comforts of life for themselves and those economically dependent upon them.

I believe this will only come when the workers are better educated and more efficient in their work than they are now; but it should be noticed that we have already established minimums in many industries. The Trade Unions, backed by the State, have their minimum rates of pay in all the skilled and in some of the unskilled industries in the country. All State employees and most employees of local bodies are paid "Trade Union" rates. In all public contracts the Trade Union rates are usually insisted upon. Both political parties are proposing to give a minimum wage to the agricultural labourers, who are more numerous than the workers engaged in any other one industry. Most important of all, in its probable results, is the establishment, by this Government, of Trade Boards to secure minimum rates of pay in sweated industries. Four trades (slop-tailoring, paper-box making, chain-making and lace finishing) were originally brought under review. In them

all, substantial increments of wages have been secured, and apparently everybody concerned has benefited (including employers and customers.) Fresh trades are being included, and the construction of the Act makes it possible to extend its provisions to other occupations without further legislation. There is no reason why this machinery should not be utilised (as in Victoria) to extend the principle of a minimum wage to all the industries of the country.

## Leisure.

It may pay an individual employer to over-work his hands. It does not pay the community. Even from a purely business standpoint, it does not pay. Macaulay puts the case in as masterly a fashion as anyone will ever put it:—"I do not mean to say that a man will not produce more in a week by working seven days than by working six days. But I very much doubt whether, at the end of a year, he will generally have produced more by working seven days a week than by working six days a week; and I firmly believe that at the end of twenty years he will have produced much less by working seven days a week than by working six days a week. . . . Rely on it, that intense labour, beginning too early in life, continued too long every day, stunting the growth of the mind, leaving no time for healthful exercise, no time for intellectual culture, must impair all those high qualities which have made our country great. . . . Never will I believe that what makes a population stronger and healthier and wiser and better, can ultimately make it poorer. . . . If ever we are forced to yield the foremost place among commercial nations, we shall yield it to some people pre-eminently vigorous in body and mind."

But there are stronger arguments than the ledger-accounts. Take any view of the universe that we will, and we reach the same conclusion that man's hands were given him for other things than mere labouring and money-making. At the very least the worker is also a father and a husband (or a mother and a wife) and a citizen. And we may hope that in the future, he or she will also be something of an artist and a mystic. If we are to have promising homes and a properly governed State, we must give the heads of the households time for their domestic duties and the citizens time for the study and discussion of public affairs. Seeing also that modern conditions of labour offer little or no opportunity for culture through work, we must give the artistic and spiritual nature in man the opportunity of development outside working hours. It is deplorably true that great masses of people know of nothing better in which to employ their spare time than in coarse and even bestial pleasures. That is because the education of the people has been neglected. And we can put against it the fact, for which I can vouch from my own experience, that an increasing number of working men and women find it almost impossible to educate themselves because of the exigencies of earning their daily bread.

The reduction of hours has been proceeding throughout the century. The ancient twelve-hour day gave place to the ten, and the ten-hour day is giving place to the eight. The State has been as active for women and children as Trade Unionism has been for men. In most public employment, including the contracts let out to private firms, reasonable hours are stipulated. Latterly the State has cut down the hours of shop assistants; and under the Trade Boards Act, already referred to, hours may be overhauled as well as wages. Thus the State is already committed to a policy which seems to me vital to our progress in material as well as in moral and æsthetic things.

The power over nature which steam and electricity have given us ought to make it possible in coming years to reduce the actual toil of the community to a much smaller minimum than appears necessary at present. Mill believed that machinery had never lightened the day's toil of a single human being, but he (and more especially those quoting him) fail to realise that machinery has satisfied (with the same amount of man's work) a thousand needs that have arisen in the community for decencies, pleasures, comforts, and luxuries that were only mentioned in the fairy-books of our near ancestors. In the future we want to enjoy all these benefits that machinery can give us, but we ought also to see to it that a half of the national energy does not go to the production of worthless and superfluous trifles; that our wealth-producing is properly organised; and that every possible step is taken to organise research and improve our methods so as to effect a steady reduction in the hours of labour as the feeling of the community demands more leisure.

## Failures.

No matter how complete our national arrangements may be to secure for the whole community a healthy environment, education, income and leisure, we shall still find a certain number failing to take advantage of these provisions to reach a proper standard of citizenship. There will still be the "born-tired," the criminal, the feeble-minded, the sick.

Existing arrangements are not satisfactory for the treatment of these classes. There is a tendency to relegate them to charity or workhouse or prison without any attempt at just or appropriate treatment. We find it, as things are, almost impossible to elicit the cause of failure. We do not know if a man steals because he is unfortunate, or because he is weak-minded, or because he is wicked, or because he has a philosophic bias against the existing social order. We do not know if a man begs because he cannot get work or because he is a wastrel. And if he is a wastrel, we wonder sometimes if it is his own fault or ours. And we never shall be sure until we have provided such social conditions that every person has a chance to become healthy and capable. If people fail then—and I, for one, do not believe many will fail—we shall have a possibility of knowing why misfortune has come and helping them back once more to self-control and freedom.

For those who suffer physical or mental defects, the State will be obliged to provide medical and institutional treatment as it is doing at present. For such "passive" failures as the man who refuses work as well as for such "active" failures as the thief or the murderer, what we need is some system of moral training under compulsory detention. Experiments already made with Detention Colonies substantiate the belief that almost every man can be converted into a good citizen by appropriate treatment. If the hard monotony of the colony-discipline were slowly but continuously relieved in response to good conduct, and finally terminated when the subject had proved his right to freedom, he would have every reason for self-improvement and none for that callous indifference or inhuman despair that naturally characterise unemployable and criminal at the present day.

One of the dangers of hasty and opportunist legislation is that it makes no careful provision for those who fail to take the right advantage, or for those who succeed in taking a wrong advantage, of its provisions. This is a grave danger, for in the long run, legislation which weakens the personal responsibility of the citizens will sap the foundations of the State.

## A Final Word on Human Nature.

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When a young enthusiast for social progress has wrestled long and relentlessly with the pessimism of some aged sceptic, he is apt to be met by a knowing smile and this remark—given with an air of disposing of the whole question—“You can’t change human nature.” It is often voiced by a person who, not a minute previous, has declared that such and such an Act of Parliament will “undermine the self-reliance of the people” or “make the workers discontented”!

It is true that the elemental constituents of human nature cannot be eradicated—the hunger for food, for love, and for God. But the balance of these three fundamental needs can most assuredly be altered. In the past the hunger for food has been predominant. As we leave our animal ancestry farther behind us, the spiritual nature progressively asserts itself and the hunger for God grows, until it subdues to itself the physical appetites. Human nature in us is far more refined than it was in our savage ancestors; it is more refined than it was in our great-grandfathers; and it depends on ourselves and the laws we make whether it becomes finer still in the oncoming generation.

A good Act of Parliament is one which assists the refinement of human nature. A bad Act of Parliament is one which coarsens it. If we pass legislation which undermines individual responsibility, no matter how pressing the immediate need it meets, we are in the long run destroying the commonwealth. We shall be making citizens with weaker wills and lazier intellects; they will have enfeebled children; and quickly or slowly, but surely, decline will set in.

On the other hand, in so far as we brace the individual will and stimulate personal responsibility by legislation, we shall ennoble the race and increase the general vigour.

I claim that the measures suggested in the latter part of this pamphlet are such as will have these salutary effects; and I would like to emphasise that contention by a quotation from Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, to whose work this pamphlet lies in heavy debt:

“It is, moreover, an inevitable complement of this corporate responsibility, and of the recognition of the indissoluble partnership [between the State and the individual], that new and enlarged obligations, unknown in a state of *laissez faire*, are placed upon the individual—such as the obligation of the parent to keep his children in health, and to send them to school at the time and in the condition insisted upon; the obligation of the young persons to be well-conducted and to learn; the obligation of the adult not to infect his environment, and to submit when required to hospital treatment. To enforce these obligations—all new since 1834—upon the individual



citizen, experience shows that some other pressure on his volition is required than merely leaving him alone. Hence the community, by combination of the principles of Curative Treatment, Universal Provision and Compulsion, deliberately 'weights the alternatives,' in the guise of a series of experiments upon volition. The individual retains as much freedom of choice as—if not more than—he enjoyed before. But the father finds it made more easy for him to get his children educated, and made more disagreeable for him to neglect them. It is made more easy for the mother to keep her infants in health, and made more disagreeable for her to let them die. The man suffering from disease finds it made more easy for him to get cured without infecting his neighbours, and more disagreeable for him not to take all the necessary precautions. The labour exchanges and the farm colonies aim at making it more easy for the wage-earner to get a situation; perhaps the reformatory establishment, with powers of detention, is needed to make it more disagreeable for him not to accept and retain that situation." This "doctrine of a mutual obligation," Mr. and Mrs. Webb refer to as the "fundamental principle that social health is not a matter for the individual alone, nor for the Government alone, but depends essentially on the joint responsibility of the individual and the community for the maintenance of a definite minimum of civilised life."

Wise laws can unquestionably build up the citizenship of a society, but it cannot be too firmly or too repeatedly urged that we can never get more out of Parliament than we put into it. Parliament is only a convenient machine for making social arrangements. It is not a lucky tub into which we can throw our ballot-papers and fish out brand-new citizens. If we are an effete nation, all the political devices we can elaborate will never save us. And if we are still "mewing our mighty youth," we shall survive and remedy all defects in our legislative arrangements. This needs insisting upon, because many people think that human nature can be changed in the twinkling of an eye at the blast of the trumpets that shall usher in the Socialist Utopia. When the revolution is accomplished, the forces of capitalism routed, the old institutions torn up, and everybody provided with cakes and ale, will Mr. Smith be any the less thick-skulled than he was before the event? Will Mr. Brown be any the less weak-minded? Will Jones be more industrious? Or Robinson more honest? It will be a wonderful revolution indeed if it can suddenly purify the very blood that is in men's veins and transmute their leaden instincts into golden conduct. You and I know that the processes of Nature countenance no such sudden transformation. Nature will not jump. She will modify the thick skulls and the clumsy hands and the unseeing eyes only slowly and gradually, over long periods of time, and in response to the aspiration and effort of the man to whom the skull and eyes and hands belong.

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